DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 284 541 IR 012 784

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TITLE Media Education in the Advent of the New Technologies in Austria.
PUB DATE 86
NOTE 26p.; Paper presented at the International Television Studies Conference (London, England, 1986).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Developed Nations; Foreign Countries; Influences; *Mass Media; *Mass Media Effects; Programing (Broadcast)
IDENTIFIERS *Austria; *Media Education

ABSTRACT

This overview of mass media and media education in Austria begins by briefly describing the geography, population, government, and economy of the country. The current status of press, radio, and television in Austria is then presented, followed by a discussion of the potential benefits and problems of new communication technologies. The objectives of media education are considered together with political, social, and cultural issues affecting such education. Problems including foreign dependency, dominating neighbors, traditional bureaucratic structures, and the Austrian mentality are also noted, and a discussion of the outlook for media education in Austria concludes the paper. Five German-language references are listed. (MES)

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MEDIA EDUCATION IN THE ADVENT OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN AUSTRIA

Paper presented to the
1986 INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION STUDIES CONFERENCE

Salzburg, 1986

IR013784

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1. Austria

The small country of Austria is situated in southern central Europe, covering a part of the Eastern Alps and the Danube region. The 32.400 sq miles of the federal state of Austria (this is about the size of Scotland) are land locked and the country has common boundaries with no fewer than seven countries which belong to a variety of social and economical systems. Of the total length of Austria's frontier of app. 1.650 miles there are about 100 miles with Sitzerland, 20 with Liechtenstein, 490 with the Federal Republic of Germany, 360 with Czechoslovakia, 220 with Hungary, 190 with Yugoslavia and 270 with Italy. No point of the country is more than 70 miles away from foreign territory although, because of the landscape - more than 60 % of the state's area is taken by the Eastern Alps - it might be difficult to get there. 40 miles on road, that is about the longest distance one has to travel from any of the nine province capitals to the border.

There are about 7,5 Mio. Austrians, 1,6 Mio living in the capital and a federal province of its own right: Vienna. The city, for many centuries the capital of the multinational Habsburg monarchy, situated at the junction between the east-west trade route along the Danube and the long established communication links between the Baltic countries and the Mediteranean in Austria's economic focal point as well as on the seat of a number of international organisations.

Concerning government the Federal Republic of Austria is a parliamentary democracy with a number of presidential and plebiscitory features. Concerning economy the country has a social market system with an economy organized on a private basis in principle despite the fact that nationalized industries account for a fifth of the country's overall economic capacity.

The main basis for Austria's national economy is provided by industry and commerce with tourism as a major source of income throughout the country.

Well beyond the boundaries of the German speaking world Austria has a high cultural reputation rooted in a long tradition.

2. Mass Media

"Tradition" tends to be a loaded word in this country. One hears a lot about musical traditions, about the cultivation of the classics and of such institutions as the famous (Viennese) coffee-houses. But tradition plays no role in the media system. The occupation of Austria by Hitler's Germany ended nearly all traditions in this area and resulted in a new start in or after 1945.

Today all of the so called mass media are present in Austria. While the press is in the hands of private enterprise-owners, broadcasting is a non-profit public corporation established under federal law. Press, radio and television compete with one another for the favour of the public. As the source of initial information, television is clearly in the lead, although even clearer in the position held by the daily newspaper as the source of secondary information.

While the numbers of copies of newspapers in Austria is still rising (to about 2.8 Mio copies in 1985), the number of newspaper units went down from 33 in 1955 to 18 today. The daily press is highly concentrated in at least two respects: There is a concentration of titles and circulation in Vienna and there is a concentration of readership. Six of the 18 newspapers, all of them national dailies, are published in Vienna. The nation's capital accounts for

nearly three quarters of the daily circulation. Three newspapers make up for about 65 % of the total number of newspaper copies sold in the whole of Austria. The biggest titles are boulevard newspapers like the "Neue Kronen-Zeitung", the biggest boulevard daily in the world compared to the population figure.

Party newspapers, a feature of the old Austrian press tradition, are dying. Eight surviving examples of this type of the daily press were subsidised in 1985 with 40 Mio Austrian Schillings (app. 1.3 Mio. £) tax money - and this will not be enough this year. The much-talked-about concentration in the newspaper world will find new victims here soon. The proportion of newspapers associated with particular political parties will decline further.

Besides the newspapers there are 140 different weeklies (mostly replacements of dailies mainly in the provinces), 70 public interest magazines and about 2000 special interest journals on the market.

Most periodicals have a relatively small but stable circulation and in most cases they have as well a direct bearing on societies, associations and organisations or are directed towards particular professions, classes and associations. The largest genuine Austrian journals are not sold, they are part of the membership with trade unions, automobile clubs, building societies or book clubs.

The mass market of magazines and journals, especially family magazines, papers of the yellow press and periodicals publishing broadcasting programmes is dominated by West German titles. As a rule concerning the content it makes no difference whether a German periodical is bought in Munich or in Vienna, except it is more expensive in Austria. But in some cases German periodicals are adapted for the Austrian market with a couple of additional pages dealing

with Austrian topics. These Austrian editions pay themselves by attracting Austrian advertising and therefore making it even more difficult for small Austrian publications to compete. As more Austrians read German periodicals more Austrian advertisers will spend their money on German publications to reach Austrian audiences which in turn leaves less money to be spent in Austria on Austrian problems. The Austrian market is nearly a home market for Germans today and it is an important one. 10 % of the total of the German magazine printers'sales are done in Austria. Inputs from the big neighbour account for 93 % of all imports in this area. The rest is coming from other Western or (3 %) socialist countries of the East. In return for the huge imports of foreign periodicals into Austria, there is virtually no export (done by the way by mostly two main retailers which as well are prevailingly in the hands of Germans).

Austria is exporting authors itself. Some eminent German journalists are Austrians and Austrian novelists and writers prefer to publish in the bigger German publishing houses. Austrian book publication has a long tradition but because of the cultural similarity and the unity with language plus the much bigger sales market, the more embracing and better organised German book publishers have taken the biggest slices of this cake. 85 % of all book imports into Austria are coming from Germany, 25 % of the whole German book export is going to Austria.

At first glance the situation is different with broadcasting but foreign, especially German influence is there as well.

The Austrian broadcasting corporation (ORF) is the biggest media institution in Austria. Following a special referendum in 1964 the present station was organised as public law institution financed by listening and viewing fees (60 %) and advertising revenue (40 %). By law the ORF must produce and

transmit three radio and two television programmes. The actual offer consists of three radio programmes on VHF, one short wave service, commissioned and paid for by the Austrian government, Blue Danube Radio, a local English language programme in Vienna, two television channels, a teletext service and one satellite television programme in co-operation with the Second German Television (ZDF) and Swiss Broadcasting (SRG).

The medium that reaches the highest percentage of Austrian a day is radio with its three distinctly specialized offers. The programmes have different character and content. Ö-1 is a cultural programme, with the main emphasis on music, science, literature and information. Ö-Regional serves as a national framework within which individual provincial studios broadcast at certain times for their particular region. The overall programme of entertainment and information is of a predominantly local character. Ö-3 provides an entertainment (popular music) programme for young people, interspersed with frequent news coverage.

Both television channels are not as distinctly contrasting as the radio programmes although the first is directed towards a broader audience. Practically 100 % of the population have access to radio and television.

In Austria commercial television is strongly opposed by the government but the non-profit public corporation ORF is getting very close to such commercials with advertising blocks spread accross the whole transmitting time in the evening, by broadcasting ads now even on Sundays and by offering sponsored programmes.

Despite the fact that the corporation tries to offer as much own production as possible a third of the total transmitting time consists of (cheaper) foreign productions (25 % are repeats). And here it does not matter whether

the programme is from a commercial or non-commercial station. It seems that the viewing public inclines spontanuously towards American productions or towards offers based on that model. Of course, the national image is slowly affected by these numerous imports.

Co-production with German television stations are an important and increasing area in the programme making of Austrian TV. Again, the close connection with the German market demonstrates its influence upon the Austrian situation.

There is another example: Programmes originating outside German speaking countries are in most cases first broadcast by German television stations because of the lack of possibilities in Austria for dubbing and the high costs to have it done. In the average year just about 13 hours of television programmes are dubbed in Austria. The lion's share of dubbing is done in Germany with the result that German idioms not customary in Austria are pouring into the country assaulting the cultural identity. Prussian dialect prevails Dallas and Dynasty, Jonny Carson and Julie Christie likewise. The viewers - not used to sub-titelling and with not much foreign language maintainance - are already used to this television slang. Once a US-television series was dubbed in Austria - it was totally rejected by the audience.

But one should not neglect the problem. There is a twofold influence on the Austrian viewer: There is on the one hand the influence of the original piece of work that can be seen and there is on the other hand the cultural interpretation and adaptation for a different audience through dubbing. This two step flow may be described in relation to Tunstall's saying "The Media are American": Austrias media are hybrids, they look American and speak German.

The same is true for the cinema film. But dubbing seems just to be a minor problem here. The distribution market is dominated by West German and American firms. These concerns have arrangements with most Austrian cinemas what to show at what time. There are just a few independently run cinemas, who could take Austrian films if these films would exist. On the average only six Austrian movies or about 3 % of the total offer reach the theaters annually. The size of Austria's population, the fact that Austrians are not very fond of going to the movies (2,4 visits a year) and perhaps due to the same offer of film genres and proportions of films from other countries Austrian films had never been able to cover their costs within a purely national context. But for export's reason the producers don't stress the national character of the product any more. They internationalize content and genre and don't add to the development of Austrian culture.

Another trend is towards production for or co-production with television (plus state subsidies) which helps both the production houses (1o % of them are able to produce feature films) who need these orders from television badly as well as the ORF. The problem is that the ORF has first distribution rights. Therefore the films are not attracting audiences to cinemas. This again increases the dependency upon the success on foreign markets.

Increasing attention must be paid to foreign influence on the Austrian mass media or Austrian consumer if one thinks about the role the so called new media are going to play. Austria as a small country is flooded by media from abroad. This may be seen natural in relation to German imports because of the cultural closeness and common language but it might be dangerous for Austria's own cultural identity if it brings a kind of uniform media culture with it.

Probably here one should say a few words about the Austro-German relationship. Austria and West Germany are good neighbours. They use the same language and are each others best customers. There are many close personal and family ties, the countries share a familiarity with the same products and equipment, climate, religion and mass media. They have comparable standards of living and life-styles. But these similarities that make the countries alike drive them as well apart. Austrians feel inferior because Germans - who are nearly 10 times as many - quite often do not recognize the differences - that Austria has a different kind of government, a different history, a different perspective, that Austria is an independent country.

There is a cultural invasion, going on not possible in pre-television times when the family, the school, the church, working facilities and probably national newspapers were the main sozializing agents. Today the national identity is in danger because of a domination of Austrian thought through German mass media (especially television) and the virtual monopoly Germany has in the information flow. Austrians feel inferior and with obvious differences mandated by lack of funds (larger audiences in Germany generate larger advertising revenue or higher programme fees and result in more money for investment) their media quite often are inferior.

With an ever increasing number of programmes possible by cable and satellite television the impact of foreign productions is growing since Austrian law does - besides the ORF - not allow local or private programming within Austria. Now programmes, because of legal problems, but similar to what the ORF is airing, are just comming from abroad. And people are going to watch these programmes. Statistics show that people in the western provinces of Salzburg, Tyrol and Vorarlberg (provinces where one can in most cases receive German speaking programmes with a normal roof antenna) spend more time in

front of the tube than in the rest of the country.

Cable television increases the choice of programmes for viewers outside the direct reach of - primarily - foreign German speaking stations. Today 10 % of Austria's television housholds are connected to cable. These cable television viewers are provided with three West German programmes and the Swiss German language television as a basis. Additional programmes are fed into some cable networks via satellite. Offers mainly used are the German-Austro-Swiss venture 3Sat, Sat 1, the private German programme, or Sky Channel. Different networks offer other programmes, too, as there are a French language satellite television TV 5, an Italian programme from RAI, or RTL-plus, a German language programme from Luxembourg. Cable network operators are allowed to retrieve even programmes from commercial television stations when they are distributed without delay or changes because this is regarded as distribution not broadcasting. Technological innovations create the prerequisite of an erosion of our cultural sovereignty which is not just of legal importance.

3.The offer of the new technologies

The big difference between the situation as it was in the past with the traditional media channels and the dawning future mainly lies in the embracing presence of technological means in everyday life. The quality of transmission of still and moving pictures, of text and of sound will improve, information in the widest sense will be more and more accessible to the general audience including the operation of sets and equipment (videorecorders in connection with a camera will be used in private homes). Costs, of course, will rise, too - costs for production and transmission (satellites and optic fibre cable), fees, costs for special services, interactive videotex (Prestel), pay tv, etc.

The new technologies can offer more channels, suiting different target audiences in different areas e. g. according to age, interest, occupational needs etc. Therefore there will not be a general audience any more - it will be segmented although entertainment will be offered and used more heavily.

In Austria (broadcasting just being allowed through the ORF) no such choice is possible at the moment because of legal constraints. For the same reason there will be also no local or public access cable television.

What could be of some importance here, is the diverse entertainment offer resulting from foreign television programme distribution via satellite and cable. At the moment there are just many programmes of the same kind on different channels or even repeats of programmes shown on another channel before.

Today a great deal of the broadcast evening on Austrian television is made up of popular series and programmes bought from foreign private and commercial stations. Because their producers have already been paid once, foreign prices tend to be a bargain. In fact the prices are often much lower than those of the inferior programmes the ORF can produce themselves. The process accelerated the undermining of Austrian programming further: The ORF is sending valuable production money out of the country reducing the ability to produce own shows which in turn could attract home viewers and even money from the international market.

New technologies have the potential to stop this fatal development. Conscious of the fact that other (foreign cable and satellite) stations can put the popular "Allerwelts-" programmes on air first and better the ORF

might turn to more specific high quality Austrian productions instead of the cheap low quality homemade quiz shows broadcast today. Since the public television station - a station getting its income from fees (as it should be primarily) - is not committed to the fact that advertising firms use the channels where the large audiences are, such a station is in the position to broadcast more "valuable" and more different programmes.

Greater diversity of programme offers and competition between public law, private and commercial television can also mean a danger for the public law organisation (which bears a lot of very positive aspects especially for a small country even if they are more and more forgotten), more concentration of media ownership, more advertising, or more subsidies, less diversity of information sources (opinion monopolies), the braking of national laws through letting in foreign programmes (as happens already in Austria), no articulation for the individual because there is no money for public access channels, etc.

The last option which must be mentioned is the individual telecommunication which is possible from the technological point of view - if law permits it, which is not the case in Austria at the moment.

On the societal level the new technologies could serve administration, integration of disabled persons, articulation of laymen but they also could increase injustice, knowledge gap, damage of grown structures, more control, cultural deficiancies, more isolation.

There will also be effects on the economy, on political life but the aspects mentioned above are probably already enough to stress the importance of media education.

4. The challenge of the new technologies

Without doubt the new technologies, called new media, will change the conventional way of media usage and add a new dimension to the media spectrum. This means also a learning process within the audience. To be able to use the media offer of the new communication technologies properly the general audience e.g. must learn to deal with a vast amout of information, a flood of entertainment programmes and an all day long stream of advertising spots. The audience must be able to find out whether the informations are reduced to mear facts or heavily filtered and interpreted. The audience should know where the material is comming from and who is behind the offer, which are the interests and intentions.

The individual media user will experience positive as well as negative aspects in relation to the new communication technologies. More choice of television programmes, more freedom, more information, more chances to articulate ones own opinion, the possibility of more political participation, more active involvement in decision making all this needs the readiness and ability to use the chances that are offered by the new technologies theoretically. But if there is no guidance in the use of the possibilities the not used chances will turn out to be deprivations. If the individual does not choose between the programmes offered, if he remains passive, if the viewer or listener does not use informations in communicating with others, is fixed to the image, and does not make real life experiences he or she will be clued to the media presentation and will suffer all the frustrations that are found out in communication research already.

There are a lot of questions to be raised. Has for example perception changed because of being confronted with media outlets not specifically designed for the uses of a child audience (the typical audience most communication research

is dealing with)? If yes, how can we help the child to cope with the situation of too many and too early, too heavy stimuli? It seems inevitable that parts of the audience must adapt to new developmental stages. The language of the media has to be learnt, the character of media offering has to be understood. (By the way, children nowadays seem to better understand this even earlier than psychologists ever thought.)

The increase of television channels means more of the same, especially more entertainment, bringing a number of problems with it. Viewers for example take values and sensibilities embodied in shows for granted and assume them. For others television creates a second level of reality which they believe to be more real than their own life at least for discussions. People learn to take compassion on television characters but do not understand when another "real person" needs their pity, because it is not dramatized. It is an urgent need to train the ability of resolving conflicts in reality, otherwise there is a potential danger of loosing autonomy and identity. The audience should learn to look behind dramatizing, it should understand the mechanisms of the mass media and should urge the producers to offer a variety of possible solutions.

It is increasingly necessary to learn to see, to watch thoroughly (through media analysis but also in real life situations) to deal with mediated information.

New chances for action including production of media are badly needed. New communication technologies could offer possiblities on the local level but also in using Prestel or computers. Corresponding with the technological development educational institutions need to put more emphasis on learning by doing to compensate where compensation is needed. But - and this is important and must not be left unnoticed here - media education should not be the place where all the deficiancies of a society are tried to be compensated.

The individual media consumer will have to develop strategies for behavior in relation to the mass media and the new technologies. Theoretical expectations for media education therefore range between the prevention of the development (through participation in media policy decisions) to the increase or prevention of possible consequences and considerations to achieve emancipatory competencies. Nevertheless the fulfillment of any of these expectations will rest upon the picture of media education.

5. The tasks of media education

The question for educators preparing pupils for a world mainly shaped by mass media has to be what are the qualifications my pupils will need to be able to live and act responsibly and autonomously with media now and in the future. This, of course, implies value decisions which today are more crucial as perhaps a generation back. The society is about to be shaped revolutionary by the development of the new media technologies.

There are and will be influences on the stages of developmental psychology, on the cognitive and emotional development.

On the basis of assumptions of such changes the structure of perception, of attitudes and of value positions, on work and actions, on behaviour will change. A transformation which should not leave educators indifferent. That is for the future.

Looking back at the beginnings of media education in Austria we could see concerned educators on the gradle for a decree in the 1960's. In 1973 this paper was issued according to that every single teacher in every subject has to deal with media education topics whenever a connection is imaginable. This means that interested individuals do as much as they want and can -

those not interested do nothing. There is no real support for the teachers; on the contrary effective media teaching is opposed to by many headmasters. Missing in this situation was the broad basis of media interested teachers as well as teacher training plus teaching material. The results of this situation may be found today where teachers are not at all prepared for their task.

In the sense of the Austrian "Medienerlaß" media education is defined as one aspect of general communication education related to the theory and practice of the development and usage of radio, television, film, press, posters, records, tapes and other technological media that will be developed in the future. It aims at critical insight into phenomena of communication to lead to a conscious and co-deciding consumption behaviour. The pupil should be enabled to find his way in a world about which he gets informations mainly through mass media. The text continues and gives a lot of possible contents for teaching but media education is restricted to knowledge about the mass media and attitudes towards mass media products however this is not enough for the future.

In a more general understanding media pedagogy does not just aim at critical awareness and readiness to use (mass) media consciously and autonomously but also at exerting influence on (the production of) mass media as well as on media political decisions. The active participation of the audience is called up which is missing in the decree.

Even if media education has not been able to master the old mass media until now there is a need to include the new technologies in this discipline. There also is a necessity for new educational perspectives that include chances as well as dangers of living with the new communication technologies. Media education has to increase the discussion about the technical systems and the

new situation that may be created by them. Media education should be able to articulate the individal to surpass passive media consumption. Media education should teach about the mediated knowledge and how to meet the requirements to be able to decide autonomously.

Probably it is possible to refuse to participate on the technological development, definitely it is practicable to protest against the development but there is not much chance for prevention. To support active participation in decision making is more important than just enabling the general audience to cope with the existing media outlets although this is the best basis for dealing with the further developments.

6. How can education create a basis for the usage of the new technologies?

Politicians are refering to media education as a very important task. Media Educators need their support badly to be able to do effective media teaching but when it comes to actually asking for support for research or actual media teaching the same politicians are not inclinded to stand up to what they said.

Media education needs a lobby and the unity of those involved to be able to achieve something. For the sake of the people a new media and education policy is inevitable. This policy should enable the media educators to help to develop a national media culture and an understanding and appreciation of such developments. For Austria this is important on different levels. The dependance on foreign media products especially from Germany as described in the introductory part does not support the Austrian national identity - it means discontent, inferiority and a lot of additional problems. (Because of a lack of possiblities for talented people in Austria they go

to Germany, publish or do their work there. On the other hand those who get well paid jobs in Austria are very often those who had been accepted in Germany and come back to Austria. In many areas people need the reputation in Germany to be accepted at home.)

Media education should build upon the needs of people in their surroundings. It should not be provoked by technological developments but before that by cultural, political, social conditions. At the moment people are overtaxed if they are confronted with the request to transform their ideas into media products. Because of missing presuppositions in education they are not able to do so, they even resist such an offer. A striking example of such a passive attitude even among young citizens happened in Salzburg just during the course of preparing this paper. The mayor of the city of Salzburg invited all the 18 years old youngsters of the town with a personal letter to present their imaginations, their ideas about their city on slides or videotape. At the first scheduled meeting in youth centres seven out of the 1220 invited appeared. As one of the few participants put it: They declare themselves incompetent.

It seems as if this failure is symptomatic for a "modern" consumer society. Everybody is expecting that everything is done for him or her. Education was even promoting this attitude because it is easier for the educator to present an authoritarian opinion than to discuss something which might be called in question. There was (still is) a fear of active pupils - they might protest and revolt.

The most important step nowadays would be to train teachers to be open to changes, to the consideration of the developments in the area of mass media and communication. The demands for educators are very high especially because there is no tradition in the way of education that is wanted now.

There also is a demand for intensified media education related to the transfer of Austrian communication research results to the educators. Considerations are needed of how to involve the public in media critique and production. Media personell should be stired up to deal with the power in their hands more carefully. Politicians need a watchdog and not just a mouthpiece. Mass media have to fulfill a task they need a watchdog, too, especially if they are getting too close to the political parties and the government.

Media politics determines the whole system of the mass media probably not only in Austria. Mass media are an increasingly important mediator of culture and contribute to cultural identity. If the existing mass media do not do a proper job they need to get new guidelines and the people need to get their say and chance to contribute.

Media education could try to achieve such awareness and needs to get involved in decision making in media politics by going public with their insight. There is a need for getting to know the new technologies and their implications on the individual as well as the society. The interrelationship between the new communication technologies and their connection with private needs requires visualisation. Media education has to deal with the media to enable students to use all the potentials of a medium with the aim of communication competency in a world shaped and guided by media.

Besides the strengthening of a national consciousness and media culture the open mindedness for other cultures must be developed as well. Satellite television could bring together viewers of the whole of Europe - and the world. The different languages are a barrier but a challenge, too. Especially television unhampered by the filters of another country's journalists could use its potential to create more understanding of a different cultural background. New forms of television programmes could be developed to foster this mutual

interest and understanding but there needs to be a concept of regulation covering the whole of Europe because cross frontier communication can undermine national regulations.

A small country like Austria needs the co-operation with big neighbours in many ways but it also needs to stand on its own feet. The task of the future will be to find the right balance.

6. Major problems for media education in Austria

Media education is facing a lot of problems worldwide - sometimes because of its nature but also because of different conditions in specific surroundings which can mean a certain country or a certain educational situation.

The Austrian example may stand for a small country with limited funds, with a strong bureaucracy and little chance for innovations on the one hand and two neighbours that could serve as models - the wealthy and big Federal Republic of Germany and the small, rich, active and besides all traditional bonds innovative Switzerland.

In this last chapter several points should be summed up (partly repeating aspects from the previous pages) to describe the frame of media education in Austria. There are problems arising from the heavy presence of Germany, there are problems within the educational system and school administration and there are problems due to the Austrian government's (lack of) media polics. Worth mentioning in this context are especially

- the problem of foreign dependancy and dominating neighbours and the problem of
- the burden of traditional structures and the Austrian mentality.

- The problem of foreign dependency and dominating neighbours

Communications science including research on mass media and their audiences and research into media education, are all new fields attracting not much money nor public interest in Austria. The situation is dominated by German influences through books, journals, research reports and many German professors at the universities. These facts create a lot of real problems, somebody from outside may not see at first sight. For example because there is no readable general book about the Austrian mass media scene for teachers, not to talk about textbooks for pupils, teachers are turning to German sources and adapt them (more or less so) or leave the whole subject aside. As media education is supposed to be included in every subject media topics should be included in all the other textbooks. Very rarely there are some hints (if at all in German language teaching or in political studies). Lately revised sylabusses for secondary schools now include references to media education but background information for teachers is still missing - besides one is using material from Germany or Switzerland. (The Swiss situation of media education could really be an example for Austria because it is small, too, but they put very much emphasis on research into the media education framework, providing teacher training, educational material plus the chance for young people of producing own works for television.)

On the other hand because of this existence of German language material (especially printed material) there seems to be no necessity for publishing Austrian material on the topic. So the difference between the Austrian and the German or Swiss situation of mass media, of mass media consumption, attitudes etc, is not worked out (it is supposed to be the same) - information about Austrian media politics is missing at all. Media criticism therefore lacks the basic foundation from information about the Austrian system. The situation gets tougher and applied to the new communication technologies there are no comparable facts.

The renounce of Austrian research may be seen as indicator that Austrians do not see a (cultural) problem of their media and communication dependancy. The country imports problems with those structures and also the solutions of the problems. It lets resolve. There is a demand for intensified media education related research and the transfer of Austrian communication research results to the educators.

- The burden of firm traditional structures and the Austrian mentality

In the last century Austria had to change in an often difficult process from a major power to a small Republic of no importance. Under pressure of different kind this change was performed in many fields but some areas remained where this change was not executed. The large bureaucratic body for example, useful for an empire, was now acting in a minor state. The traditional spending of money is still continued and new undertakings find it very hard to get even a small part of the budget.

At the universities there is little money for new scientific disciplines. Departments of mass communication - there are two in Austria - are fairly new and have a lot of problems to solve. Mass communication studies are mainly empirical studies. There is a lot of theoretical thinking about things that could or might happen but practical work is quite often hindered by difficulties resulting from not available teaching material or teachers or in the general structure of the university system. Film and television production for example is restricted to film and television schools only.or when some sort of equipment is borrowed from video initiatives for a practical course. There is no money for travel expenses for practicioners not living in town, courses cannot be held because there are no funds for additional lectures or the minister is opposing them, there is, of course, no training of journalists at university level.

The slow and bureaucratic structure of education in Austria and the fear someone could take something from the other's share are a real burden for innovations. Once a step has been reached (for example the issue of the "Medienerlaß") the process is not followed up but brought to a halt instead for another couple of years. Concerning the decree for media education for example there was no follow up activity with teacher training or preparation of educational material on the topic. There seems to be a typically Austrian attribute behind this: You want something to be done (in media education). Now we invested all our talent and energy to fulfill your wish, now it is your turn to execute what you wanted. We were among the first ones who did something like this - the rest is not in the history book, the rest does not really matter.

This attitude together with the special phenomenon of Austria, that everything must be regulated and pressed into laws before it can be done (although rules are not taken seriously on the other hand) is a further drag for media education whose goal is the mature citizen.

7. The chances of media education

The impact of the new media, new offer and new insight will render the chance for media educators to stand up and demand a (new) media policy. Nobody realistically wants to ask for exaggerated nationalism. This would lead to isolation but the aim of a progressive media policy should be to allow for programmes where people can find themselves. Programmes should meet Austrian needs, should contribute to national identity and culture and be a forum for our people. But through foreign competition (via cable) this need now seems to be even pushed further away and public law broadcasting attempts to be similar if not the same as that of private and commercial stations but this

needs not be necessarily so. One should demand the possibility of public access and equal chances for our Austrian economy. The broadcasting law includes a lot of very positive tasks for the ORF - the exertion of its tasks should be controlled more strictly and people should have much more influence.

An Austrian saying is "Who pays - commands". Why should this not be possible in this area? The audience is directly paying fees for the broadcasting, therefore it should as well be allowed to be more responsible for the output.

It just makes sense to develop critical awareness among pupils if there are chances to influence the situation of the mass media and in the long run the country itself. If there is no chance for a change people will more and more get discouraged or angry and quiet. New technologies may be the motive for a new and successful media education.

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Besides these titles mentioned there are numerous seminar and research papers or manuscripts for speeches, dealing with certain aspects of this text and used for its preparation. But because these references are mainly unpublished and not within reach for most of the participants of the conference this literature is not listed here.